



Editorial

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The growing interest in the medieval archaeology of the wider European community, already demonstrated at the 'Medieval Europe' conference of 1992, was further stimulated by the annual MPRG conference held at the University of Southampton between 22nd – 24th March 1993, on the topic of Late Medieval Imported Pottery. Twenty-three speakers from eleven different countries as far afield as Italy and Norway presented the results of recent research into pottery production and distribution under four headings: Ports, Markets and Sites of Consumption; Other Types of Evidence (documentary evidence and shipwrecks); Sites of Production; The Wider Perspective.

This conference was well-attended and a great success, with a wide-ranging display of material, both from Southampton and abroad. It also marked two other events. Firstly, Hugo Blake completed his three-year term as President of the MPRG. On behalf of the Group we extend our thanks to him for his skilful leadership and considerable achievement in promoting our work on the Continent, and warmly welcome Charles Murray as his successor. Secondly, the conference marked the retirement of Bob Thompson, a key figure both in the archaeology of Southampton and in the study of medieval pottery in Britain.

Given this background, it is with great pleasure that we present in this volume the first of the 'proceedings' of this conference. For convenience the nine papers published here have been grouped geographically and chronologically rather than thematically. We start with a survey of ceramic research in Italy given by Hugo Blake as the Tenth Gerald Dunning Memorial Lecture, and then proceed through Tuscany and Liguria to Seville and the ports of Spain; thence we move northwards to Normandy and, via Bruges, to the shipwrecks of the Zuider Zee in Holland (now the

IJsselmeer). Finally, and fittingly, we arrive in the City of Southampton itself.

In addition to these papers there are the usual regular features, including a range of shorter contributions, many pertinent to the main theme of the volume, and a summary of the ceramic component of the 1992 conference on medieval Europe.

This volume would not have been possible without the efforts of all the contributors and the generous grants received from the British Academy (for general production costs) and The Council for British Archaeology (for Duncan Brown's paper and the Bibliography). On behalf of the MPRG we express our gratitude to these bodies for their support, which has enabled us, amongst other things, to include the colour plates needed to do the range and artistic quality of the imported wares justice.

We are also indebted to all those who have assisted in other ways, especially Ian Riddler and Magella Egan, who have patiently carried out the disk conversion for us. Thanks are also due to Anthony Ray for his translation of the paper on Seville Coarsewares, to Agnes Shepherd and Christine Bedeschi-Smith for the French summaries, to Frederike and Klaus Hammer for the German summaries and, last but not least, to Graham Reed for the delightful cover design.

This is the last volume we shall produce as co-editors, and we should like to take this opportunity to say how much we have gained from the experience and to thank all those who have contributed in many different ways to the journals we have published. We also extend our thanks to the members of the Editorial Committee and Council who have served alongside us, for their constructive and stimulating views on each new volume. We hope that the new editorial team will enjoy their term as much as we have, and wish them every success in their task.